

State of Alaska Department of **Transportation and Public Facilities**

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Contractor selected to build Tanana Valley Railroad Trainhouse & Museum

Project will help project backers achieve goals to preserve Fairbanks railroad history.

“This project is the culmination of 14 years of work by a small group of dedicated volunteers to restore and refurbish the history of the Tanana Valley Railroad in the Fairbanks area.” Said Dan Gullickson, President of the Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad (FTVRR), a nonprofit dedicated to restoring Tanana Valley Railroad Engine #1 and preserving the history of the Tanana Valley Railroad. “With the completion of this project, we will have met our basic goals.”

“We’re pleased to be part of preserving Fairbanks’ transportation history.” Said Andrew Niemiec, Director for The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Northern Region. DOT&PF selected GHEMM Company, Inc. to construct the Tanana Valley Railroad Trainhouse and Museum in summer 2005.

The 3,500 square foot building will be located in Pioneer Park and open to the public in the summer during regular Park hours and by appointment the rest of the year. Engine No. 1, which began its service in the Yukon in 1899 and was sold to the Tanana Mines Railway in 1905, will be the main attraction of the building. The engine was the first steam locomotive in Interior Alaska and was in service from 1905 to 1923. It has been fully restored in recent years. Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad plan to fill the museum area with interpretive displays and other collected artifacts from the era. The trainhouse will provide volunteers a space to maintain the century old engine and other donated railroad equipment. “We are excited to share the history of the Fairbanks railroad with the community.” Said Gullickson. The FTVRR plans to work with local schools to arrange educational class trips to the museum throughout the school year.

The museum and trainhouse will be jointly operated by FTVRR volunteers and Pioneer Park staff. The project is scheduled to be complete by the end of November 2005 will cost approximately \$1.6 million to construct.

For more information contact Shannon McCarthy, Information Officer, DOT&PF Northern Region at (907) 451-2240.